

HIRE GOOD MANAGERS

Time and time again, research and anecdotal evidence demonstrates that direct line managers, not top level executives, have the most significant impact on a company's employees. An effective manager can be the most influential advisor, the most persuasive motivator, and the most trusted communicator to his employees. Conversely, of course, an ineffective manager can be detrimental to employees' level of morale, satisfaction, and commitment to the company. Indeed, people don't leave companies, they leave bad managers.

How, though, do businesses build better managers? Some experts believe that good managerial skills are innate, not learned. It seems like a rather defeatist attitude, however, to suggest that there is no way to improve ourselves or our skills as managers. In fact, managerial training and consulting is a multi-billion dollar business, so you would hope that some managers somewhere are learning a little something about being better at what they do. Without incurring a steep fee, however, what advice can you offer your managers to help them develop and refine their skills? Here are ten things good managers do well.

1. **Hire good people** – Like any good coach with tell you, maintaining solid fundamentals is key is an organization's success, and there is nothing more fundamental than having the right people on your team. Recognizing talent in a job applicant and matching his or her skills to a job is something good managers do whenever they have the opportunity to fill an open position.
2. **Focus on the strengths, not the weaknesses, of employees** – Too often, managers dwell on employees' weaknesses in an effort to help them improve. Good managers, however, focus on their employees' strengths, helping them further develop in areas where they already show some skill and competency.
3. **Set a positive tone** – A manager can make or break an employee's day by the words he chooses or the manner in which she reacts to an issue. Superior supervisors manage to maintain a constructive and professional attitude, even in a crisis. By cultivating a positive and proactive work environment, rather than a defensive or divisive one, good managers help employees be productive and successful.
4. **Communicate clearly and openly** – Good managers maintain good two-way communication with their employees. Not only do they establish clear expectations for their team, but they remain open to answering questions and addressing concerns. And when priorities change, they explain the rationale for changes rather than leave their employees to speculate or question managements' judgment.
5. **Emphasize strategy implementation, not merely development** – Most of us have, at one time or another, known managers who are good strategists, but never seem capable of rolling up their sleeves and implementing those strategies. Good

- managers do more than devise plans - they successfully implement them as well, and in the process, they become part of the team rather than just supervising it.
6. **Promote the success of others** – Dale Carnegie once said you can have more fun and achieve greater success by helping people achieve their goals than by focusing only on your own. Good managers seem to intuitively recognize this. They focus their energy and efforts on helping their team and its individual members succeed, and in turn, their teams are motivated to perform.
 7. **Provide frequent, informal feedback** – Companies of all shapes and sizes conduct annual or semi-annual performance evaluation processes to provide employees formal feedback on their performance. Effective managers, however, provide more frequent and less-formal feedback, perhaps in the form of a written or a verbal “Atta-boy,” to keep employees motivated and on track in between those corporate-wide review processes.
 8. **Enforce high standards** – While there are anomalies to every rule, many people perform to the standards set for them. Exceptional managers get more from their employees because they set and enforce higher standards, and they insist that every team member contribute.
 9. **Support their team** – Superb supervisors are a lot like parents of teenagers. They trust their employees enough to give them a tremendous amount of responsibility and autonomy, but they don’t leave them unsupervised or without a safety net. They have their employees’ backs, offering support at every turn to help ensure their employees’ success.
 10. **Set a good example** – Finally, it isn’t enough just to set goals or a strategy – good managers also set a positive example for their employees. When managers say one thing, but do another, they lose all credibility with employees, but when they genuinely model a strong work ethic, engagement or commitment to the company, that behavior is then reflected in their employees.

The origin of good management skills, whether innate to some individuals or learned by others, may be debatable, but the significant impact and lasting influence a manager has on his or her employees is undeniable. It is smart business, therefore, to identify or build managers who, if nothing else, recognize their role in motivating employees and accept that responsibility with genuine enthusiasm.